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Mandatory Review

Case # NLJ 92-348

Document # 9

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
28 January 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Pueblo Sitrep No. 16
(As of 5 P.M. EST)

1. Pyongyang's latest statement on the Pueblo case came today from a deputy premier who told reporters at a Damascus airport that North Korea will "severely punish" the Pueblo crew. He charged that the US hopes to "cover up its espionage against our country and other barbaric acts it has committed" by taking the case to the UN Security Council, and warned that "if the American imperialists dare to commit aggression or a sudden attack on our country, we will repulse it completely." The deputy premier was on his way to Baghdad, where North Korea has a consulate, for six days of discussions with Iraqi officials.

2. North Korea's deputy foreign affairs minister, it has just been learned, convened all accredited missions in Pyongyang yesterday to deliver a declaration on the Pueblo seizure. Claiming that the capture was "a legitimate defense measure" against "overt aggression," he insisted North Korea "is not intimidated by reprisal measures and holds itself in readiness to face American provocation or invasion."

3. Peking has issued a new and stronger expression of support for Pyongyang. An official Chinese government statement said today that "the Chinese government and people firmly support the just stand" of North Korea. A New China News Agency report issued earlier today stated only that Peking was watching the Korean situation with "close attention." China is undoubtedly anxious that its support of North Korea appear as least as strong as that of the Soviet Union. The new statement from Peking attempted to depict the Pueblo incident as further evidence of US plans to expand the Vietnam war--a favorite theme of recent Chinese propaganda. The

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Chinese pronouncement strongly condemned the US military buildup in the Sea of Japan and concluded with a warning that "US imperialism has forgotten the lesson it was taught in the Korean War."

4. UN missions throughout New York City reportedly met behind closed doors today to prepare for tomorrow afternoon's Security Council meeting. One topic of discussion was known to be Canada's suggestion for the appointment of UN Secretary-General Thant or another neutral mediator.

5. The Forrestal-class attack carrier Ranger and three escorting destroyers are due to join the Enterprise task group on the morning of the 31st (EST).

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